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Architecture In Cinema

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ABSTRACT :

This paper gives data about the intersection of cinema and architecture as a relation between architecture designs and storytelling. In this, we will study about the inter relation between both architecture and cinema. Now we'll focus on how architecture of space catalyzes the storytelling of movies and also how it fills the gap of time and space.



Fig. 1 Sources: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0134047/mediaviewer/rm746220033/>

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Introduction

India's film industry is renowned for vibrant colorful movie aesthetics. When we talk about cinema and its visuals, there is a major part for which we depend on architecture. If we want a person to feel about the movie's aesthetic, we try to show the buildings like that like if you are focusing on village area, we will construct village sets and its aesthetic. If we are going for Haveli's and grand big areas we will focus on creating the grand spaces. These details connect the viewers emotionally so that they dwell so much into the movie for that time, span. So, architecture also plays a major role in cinema. We will study in detail about this in two movie case studies, Devdas and Lagaan. its perspective, and emotion.

1.1. Architecture language in cinema

Architecture in cinema enhances its uniqueness through set design, different locations, versatile materials, spatial division, and motifs in accordance with their culture. Each film tells a story in unique "architectural language" that supports its aesthetics, story and emotional connection. This architectural language can be:

- Reflecting realism: Giving the real-world feeling by staying grounded through architecture (as in Lagaan).
- Enhancing emotion display: Showcasing emotional connect through space (as in Devdas).
- Fantasizing the different world: just like real unique sci-fi worlds, and a world of Barbies.

Impacts of cinematic architecture on public perception.

- Architecture in films doesn't just show reality — it makes it look alive even in fantasy worlds. According to viewers imagine, the buildings and cities are portrayed in such a way that they come closer to their dream world. Films like The Grand Budapest Hotel Inception and Blade Runner are some best examples, give it a watch.

- As a result, today architects are aware of the showcase of emotions through space. Designers make some reference drawings to make a path to a different world, to open number of minds, so that they can think differently, creating a culturally meaningful environment and not just showing fantasies.

Case study 1: Devdas (2002)

Devdas, a movie produced by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, who plays with architecture of set so that one can feel emotional, connect or the emotion of humans living in that Haveli can be shown by its architecture.

Production Design: Nitin Chandrakant Desai

1.2. Paro's Haveli as Emotional core of movie

Like the focal point of the movie, like the scene goes again and again to the Paro's house, the house gives the feeling of warmth of love. It is more welcoming than other houses shown in the movie because of the elements added like flowers, moonlight, and the wind breeze in her balcony. her house shows the Bengali traditional architectural house with courtyards. This also shows the innocence of childhood love. So, when Paro returns to her home after marriage it is a painful reminder of her lost love.

Design specifications:

- Wooden carvings of Bengali style
- Open balconies intricately jaali work.
- Use of shadow and to show transitions



Fig2.Sources: <https://movie-locations.com/movies//Lagaan.php>



Fig3.Sources: <https://movie-locations.com/movies//Lagaan.php>

1.3. Dev's Mansion – The Architecture of Ego and Control

The film opens in a big mansion, with Jharokha and a long staircase, as Devdas returns from London to his ancestral home, so the Haveli's architecture gives that feeling. The interior of set, gives the feeling of patriarchal dominance, rigid traditions, and emotional distance like in movie, everyone is busy in their work, not so connected with each other, gives the feeling of conflict.

- Devdas's home is designed after British-colonial architecture,
- High ceilings showcases Emotional distance
- Lack of curves means lack of love, shows rigidity, no softness, no empathy.



Fig4.Sources: <https://movie-locations.com/movies//Lagaan.php>



Fig5.Sources: <https://movie-locations.com/movies//Lagaan.php>

1.4. Chandramukhi's Courtesan House – Space of Liberation

As the character Chandramukhi, her Kotha gives the feeling of freedom and liveliness. The architecture is lavish but also gives the emotional fluidity. It is the contrasting world as compared to Paro's home and Devdas Home as it has used the sparkling colours full Windows. dim lighting and red toned interiors, which gives the feeling of mystery, but love

Narration:

- Showcases his mental breakdown and how he desires for unconditional acceptance.
- The only space where Dev can be him and he smiles, comes back to his soft era.



Fig6.Sources: <https://movie-locations.com/movies/I/Lagaan.php>



Fig7.Sources: <https://movie-locations.com/movies/I/Lagaan>.

1.5. Cinematography and Architecture

Bhansali shoots his characters through columns, jaali works and arches, using architecture to show isolation visually. The movie used all traditional architecture with big Windows corridors staircase, balcony staircase shows the difference of level in building also in their communities, balconies, and windows gives the sense of longing as Paro wait for Dev there.

1.6. Movie climax: The Ending Scene

Where Dev dies in front of Paro Haveli and Paro is alive, but caged in a Haveli, trying to break the barriers, the gates of Haveli and Dev die under the open sky.

As all three buildings which conclude the architecture of sets in the movie show different emotions, which are the emotions of people living in that Haveli. So, this is how architecture of sets tells the story of cinema.

Case study 2: Lagaan (2002)

The movie Lagaan takes us back to the time of Britishers era, showcasing of fictional village of Champaner. The scene of the movie briefly describes the dry land of the village. The movie sets are based on vernacular architecture style focuses more on realism than a fancy world, keeping the sets low key to the ground as it try to give the idea of villagers and their simple life. It is directed by Ashutosh Gowariker, Production Design by Nitin Desai.



Fig6.Sources: <https://movie-locations.com/movies/I/Lagaan.php>



Fig7.Sources: <https://movie-locations.com/movies/I/Lagaan>.

1.7. Village of Champaner – A Study in Vernacular Architecture

When the movie opens, it shows the dry land of Champaner and hutlike structures where people live all of mud here the main set is of whole village. Homes are made by mud and thatched roof, which shows the old vernacular architecture of Kutch region. Circular bhungas famous in Kutch region are shown there, which are traditional huts with painted wall. Cow dunk plastering Chulha for cooking, such small details of village are shown in the movie. The whole village is around the central water source. In conclusion, they tried to show the grounded lifestyle of villagers, shows their unity

Design Values:

- Built using old techniques like rammed earth.
- Homes of village are arranged covering the water in centre.

1.8. British Cantonment – the symbol of power and dominance.

This is the contrasting world in the movie, apart from the villages. It contains a bungalow of Captain, which uses modern style architecture of foreign. The architecture of huge mansion shows the strength, power and dominance against the local people of simple village.

Architectural Contrast:

- Colour palette: Grey and whites (British) vs. Browns and reds (village).
- Floor levels: British always levelled physically higher.
- Windows: simple in village homes, French windows in British cantonments.

1.9. *The Cricket Ground – Theatre of Resistance*

It is a space, owned by none and used by all. It shows how a ordinary ground turns into battlefield of dignity, The architecture is absent but the openness says it all, the democracy contrasting from containments.

1.10. *The temple, a ray of Hope:*

the temple structure is held by emotions of people. As in the times of crisis, they go there for prayer.

Here, I conclude this case study as this movie sums up, showing the difference between Local life of people by showing vernacular architecture and realism, and then the modern architecture of bungalow of Britishers, which tells the story of Britishers dominance against local people of village.

1.11. *Filming Techniques with Architecture*

The wide angled shots in movie, shows the unity in its layout, emphasizes power in collectiveness. The camera enters homes from the threshold, showing boundary lines. British spaces are shot with low angles to emphasize dominance.

1.12. *The Role of the Art Director*

In both films, Nitin Chandrakant Desai acts as the invisible architect of emotion. He researches, sketches, and constructs worlds that must feel real and resonate with audience memory. His work blends interior design, architecture, costume compatibility, and camera movement.

Conclusion:

So architecture in Indian cinema really influences storytelling by using different styles of architecture, different elements so that they showcase the character's role or characters emotions in the movie. Sometimes they take you back to history. Sometimes shows the realism by staying grounded and sometimes a different fantasy world without limiting our imagination by two case studies I have mentioned above, one shows the reflection of characters in the architecture of building and another one shows the two contrasting worlds of simple life and lavish life through architecture.

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